

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 85TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 23, 2017

TO: Honorable John Kuempel, Chair, House Committee on Licensing & Administrative Procedures

FROM: Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB1958 by Springer (Relating to the licensure or certification of volunteer firefighters and members of industrial emergency response teams.), **As Introduced**

The provisions of the bill could result in an indeterminate negative revenue impact to the Texas Commission on Fire Protection resulting from an indeterminate number of part-time fire protection employees who opt not to acquire or renew their firefighter certifications.

The bill would amend the Government Code to prohibit a state agency from requiring the licensing or certification of an individual as a condition of being a volunteer firefighter, or requiring a member of an industrial emergency response team to obtain a license or certification as a condition of being a member of such a team. The bill would authorize a state agency to require a volunteer firefighter, or a member of an industrial emergency response team, to possess certain credentials, as determined by the agency, to participate in disaster response or deployments requested by the Texas A&M Forest Service or the Department of Public Safety. The bill would define a "volunteer firefighter" as a member of a volunteer fire department who is not a full-time paid employee or a part-time employee of a fire department.

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) estimates it regulates approximately 2,700 individuals classified as part-time fire protection employees. To hold certification with TCFP, these part-time individuals must take a certification examination and pay a fee of \$85, and then submit an application for certification with an additional fee of \$85, totaling \$170 to initially become certified by TCFP. The individuals then pay a certification renewal fee of \$75 annually if they wish to continue to hold certification with the agency.

Presumably, the qualified removal of regulatory authority over these individuals could have a negative impact on revenue generated by the agency, to the degree the part-time fire protection employees noted above who participate in the programs offered by the agency opt not to participate. This fiscal note assumes the number of those volunteers opting not to acquire or renew a license or certification from TCFP is indeterminate.

The bill would take effect immediately upon a two-thirds vote of all the members of each chamber; otherwise, the bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

Local Government Impact

To the extent units of local government reimburse volunteer firefighters for the cost of certification, there could be a reduced cost as a result of certification becoming voluntary.

Source Agencies: 405 Department of Public Safety, 411 Commission on Fire Protection, 576 Texas A&M Forest Service, 308 State Auditor's Office, 403 Veterans Commission, 454 Department of Insurance, 304 Comptroller of Public Accounts

LBB Staff: UP, JAW, FR, NV, JLi, CL, AI, SZ, ER, KKR, SD, KK